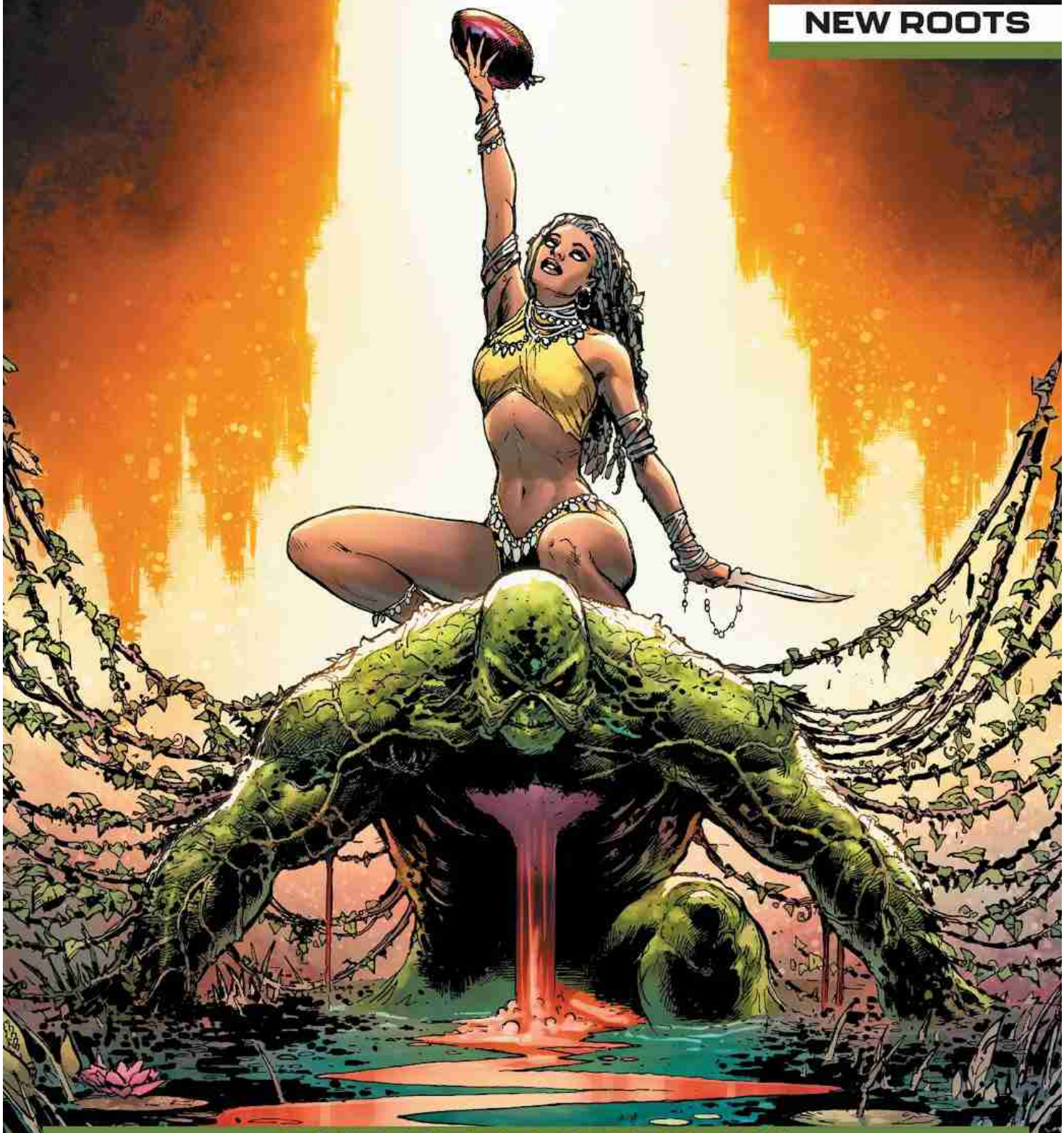
DC DIGITAL FIRST

SWAMP THING

NEW ROOTS



THE BEET GOES ON

RUSSELL - SANTUCCI - KALISZ

THE BEET GOES ON

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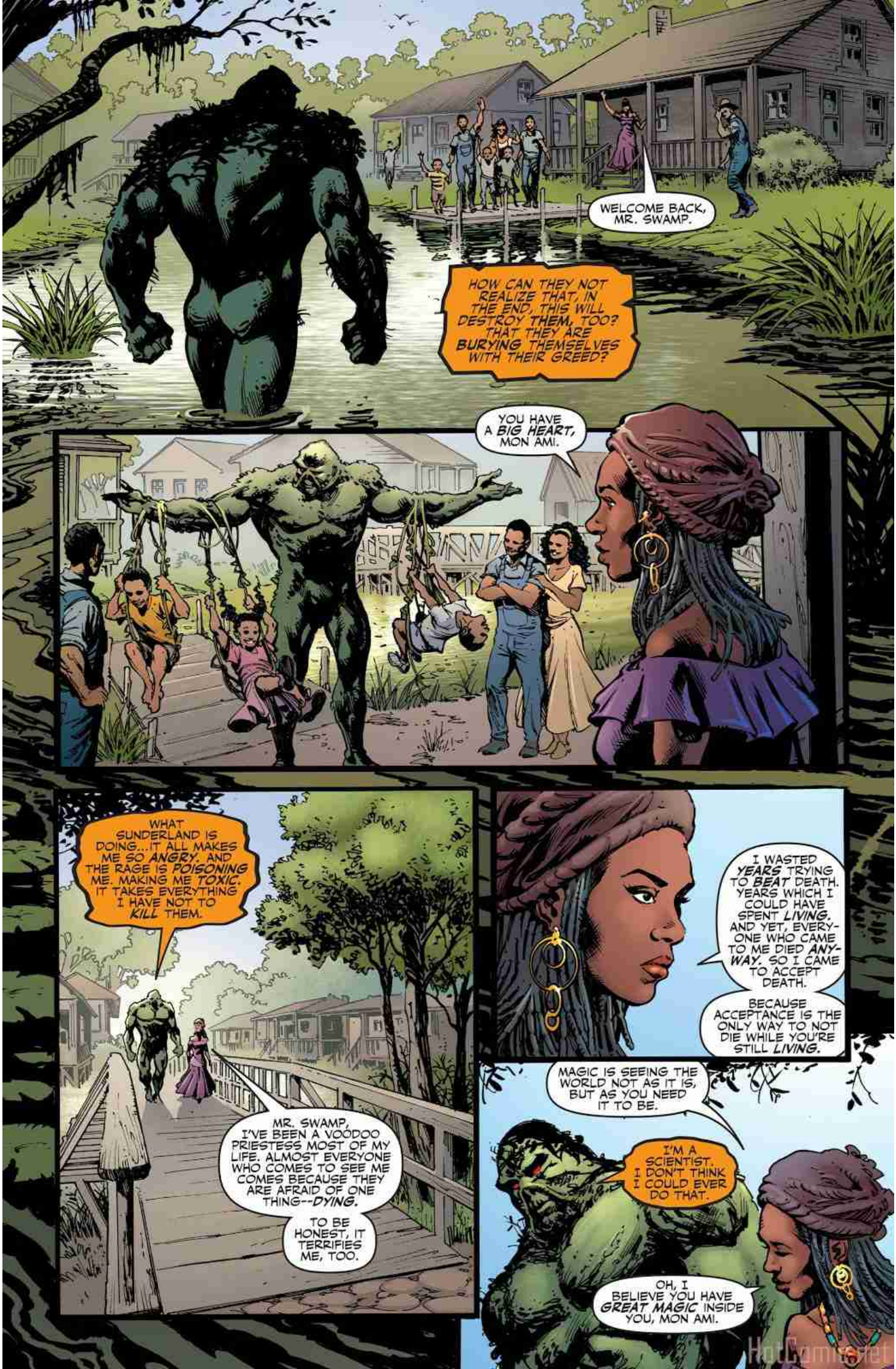
SUNDERLAND HAS FACILITIES ALL OVER LOUISIANA.
ALL GROWING THE SAME THING...
...DEATH.
THE TERMINUS SEED IS BIOENGINEERED TO STERILIZE ITSELF SO FARMERS WILL HAVE TO BUY MORE.
BUT IT ALSO STERILIZES EVERY PLANT IT CROSS-POLLINATES WITH. ONCE IT GETS OUT, THERE'S NO STOPPING IT. IT IS A DEATH SENTENCE.
FOR ALL OF US. UNLESS I CAN STOP IT.
PLEASE. WHATEVER YOU ARE. PLEASE DON'T KILL US.
I AM NOT GOING TO KILL YOU.
YOU ARE NOT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM.
YOU ARE, HOWEVER, ITS BRANCHES.
THEY WILL SEND PEOPLE TO FIND YOU IN A FEW HOURS.
IF YOU'RE LUCKY, ONE OF THEM WILL HAVE A SAW.


WELCOME BACK, MR. SWAMP.
HOW CAN THEY NOT REALIZE THAT, IN THE END, THIS WILL DESTROY THEM, TOO? THAT THEY ARE BURYING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR GREED?
YOU HAVE A BIG HEART, MON AMI.
WHAT SUNDERLAND IS DOING...IT ALL MAKES ME SO ANGRY. AND THE RAGE IS POISONING ME. MAKING ME TOXIC. IT TAKES EVERYTHING I HAVE NOT TO KILL THEM.
I WASTED YEARS TRYING TO BEAT DEATH. YEARS WHICH I COULD HAVE SPENT LIVING. AND YET, EVERYONE WHO CAME TO ME DIED ANYWAY. SO I CAME TO ACCEPT DEATH.
BECAUSE ACCEPTANCE IS THE ONLY WAY TO NOT DIE WHILE YOU'RE STILL LIVING.
MR. SWAMP, I'VE BEEN A VOODOO PRIESTESS MOST OF MY LIFE. ALMOST EVERYONE WHO COMES TO SEE ME COMES BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID OF ONE THING--DYING.
TO BE HONEST, IT TERRIFIES ME, TOO.
MAGIC IS SEEING THE WORLD NOT AS IT IS, BUT AS YOU NEED IT TO BE.
I'M A SCIENTIST. I DON'T THINK I COULD EVER DO THAT.
OH, I BELIEVE YOU HAVE GREAT MAGIC INSIDE YOU, MON AMI.

MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT. MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE UP...FIGHTING DEATH IS KILLING ME. THE WORLD IS TOO FULL OF MONSTERS.
TO KEEP THE ANGER, THE RAGE, THE FEAR FROM RUINING ME...
...I'VE HAD TO SQUEEZE IT ALL INTO ONE PLACE.
AND WHEN IT GETS TOO FULL...
...I SIMPLY EMPTY IT.
AND START OVER.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN SURVIVE WHILE LIVING.
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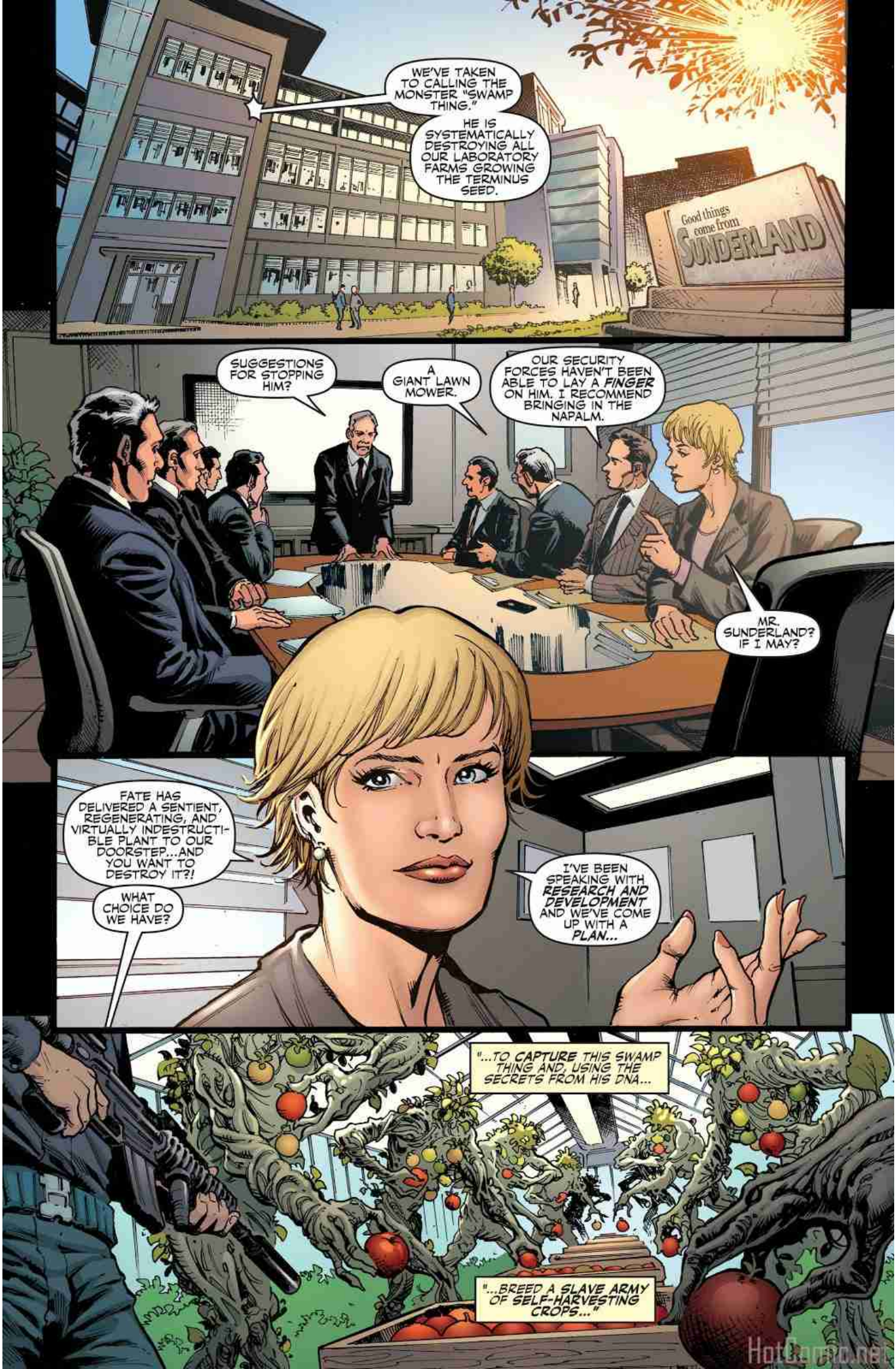
WE'VE TAKEN TO CALLING THE MONSTER "SWAMP THING."
HE IS SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYING ALL OUR LABORATORY FARMS GROWING THE TERMINUS SEED.
Good things come from SUNDERLAND
SUGGESTIONS FOR STOPPING HIM?
A GIANT LAWN MOWER.
OUR SECURITY FORCES HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LAY A FINGER ON HIM. I RECOMMEND BRINGING IN THE NAPALM.
MR. SUNDERLAND? IF I MAY?
FATE HAS DELIVERED A SENTIENT, REGENERATING, AND VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE PLANT TO OUR DOORSTEP...AND YOU WANT TO DESTROY IT?!
WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE?
I'VE BEEN SPEAKING WITH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND WE'VE COME UP WITH A PLAN...
"...TO CAPTURE THIS SWAMP THING AND, USING THE SECRETS FROM HIS DNA...
"...BREED A SLAVE ARMY OF SELF-HARVESTING CROPS..."
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BUT HOW? HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO CAPTURE THIS "MAN-WEED" OR WHATEVER HE'S CALLED?
WE'VE DEVELOPED A POWERFUL PLANT-BASED NEUROTOXIN. ONE THAT SIMULATES DEATH, BUT LEAVES THE VICTIM UNHARMED.
"WHILE HE'S UNDER, WE PUT HIM INTO AN AIRTIGHT SYNTHETIC CONTAINER SO WHEN HE WAKES UP HE CAN'T, YOU KNOW, GARDEN HIS WAY OUT.
SUNDERLAND
"OUR LAB IS EQUIPPED TO PUMP THE AIR FULL OF THE NEUROTOXIN IF HE GETS OUT OF HAND. THE NEXT TIME HE LEAVES THAT BOX, IT WILL BE AS OUR PRISONER.
"FOREVER THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF THE SUNDERLAND CORPORATION."
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BLAM
THERE HE IS! GET HIM!
BLAM
WHAM
GARRUUUNCH!
FFFFFFFTH
PLEASE, MISTER! DON'T KILL ME! I GOT A WIFE AND FAMILY... WELL, A GIRLFRIEND... ALL RIGHT! I HAVE A DATE TOMORROW NIGHT. BUT PLEASE, DON'T KILL ME!
I JUST WANT TO UNDERSTAND.
THE GRAIN YOU ARE GUARDING WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY ALL PLANT LIFE ON EARTH. WHICH MEANS IT WILL DESTROY YOU. SO WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING IT?
IT'S JUST A JOB, MAN. IT DOESN'T EVEN PAY GOOD.
DOES NOBODY UNDERSTAND? THAT, LIKE LEAVES ON A TREE, NONE OF US EXISTS IN ISOLATION.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SELL EACH OTHER OUT...
...AT LEAST GET ENOUGH FOR A DECENT BURIAL.

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NICE WORK, SALLY! SUNDERLAND WAS EATING IT UP!
YOUR PLAN SOUNDS GREAT TO ME! THEN AGAIN, CELERY JELL-O SOUNDED GREAT TO ME.
BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CATCH HIM UNAWARE ENOUGH TO INJECT HIM WITH THE NEUROTOXIN? HE'S ALWAYS ONE STEP AHEAD OF US.
"TO CAPTURE SOMEBODY LIKE THAT...YOU DON'T SEND AN ENEMY."
I THOUGHT I'D FIND YOU HERE.
"YOU SEND A FRIEND."
WANT SOME COMPANY?
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THEY MAKE ME ASHAMED TO HAVE BEEN A HUMAN BEING, FATIMA.
I'M SORRY, MR. SWAMP.
CORRUPT AND SHORT-SIGHTED. THEY WOULD WATCH THE WHOLE WORLD BURN IF THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD FIND A LITTLE MONEY IN THE ASHES. I DESPAIR OF A WORLD LEFT--
--IN THEIR...
...FLESHY...
...CLUTCHING HANDS...
I TRULY AM SORRY.
I NEVER WANTED TO BETRAY YOU...
BUT I HAVE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE LOOKING FOR A CURE TO DEATH.
LOOKING FOR *MAGIC* LIKE YOURS.
AND LIKE ALL *GREAT SOULS*, YOUR MAGIC IS LOCKED *DEEP INSIDE*.
BUT TO GET THE KEY TO *LIFE*, I HAD TO MAKE A DEAL WITH *DEATH*. AND SO IT IS TO DEATH THAT I MUST SEND YOU.
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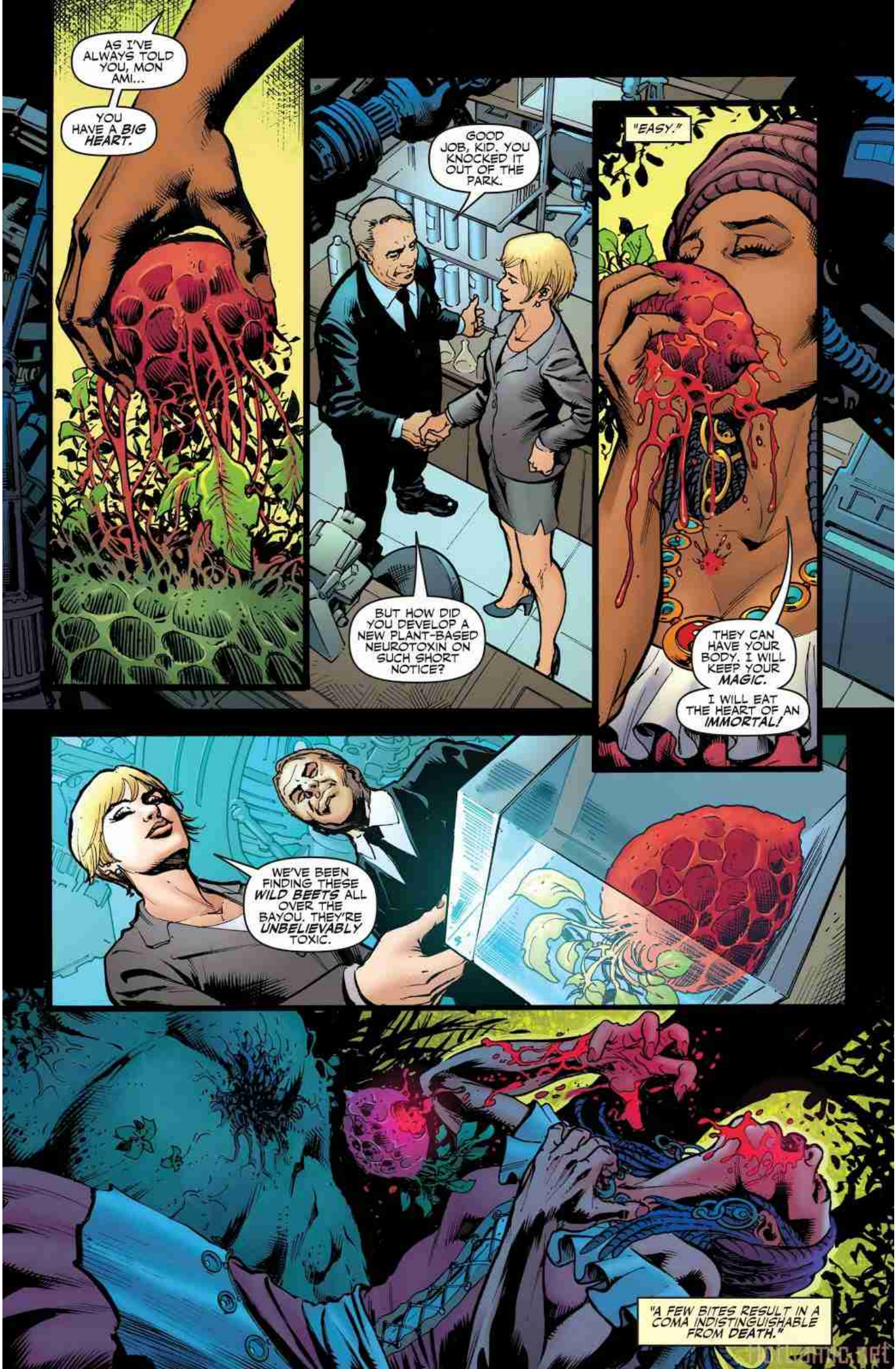
AS I'VE ALWAYS TOLD YOU, MON AMI...
YOU HAVE A BIG HEART.
GOOD JOB, KID. YOU KNOCKED IT OUT OF THE PARK.
BUT HOW DID YOU DEVELOP A NEW PLANT-BASED NEUROTOXIN ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE?
"EASY."
THEY CAN HAVE YOUR BODY. I WILL KEEP YOUR MAGIC.
I WILL EAT THE HEART OF AN IMMORTAL!
WE'VE BEEN FINDING THESE WILD BEETS ALL OVER THE BAYOU. THEY'RE UNBELIEVABLY TOXIC.
"A FEW BITES RESULT IN A COMA INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM DEATH."

WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?
I MUST HAVE COME UNDER ATTACK! BUT BY WHO?
THEY FOUND ME.
DID YOU SAVE ME, MY FRIEND?
DID YOU TRADE YOUR LIFE FOR MINE?
SHE SHOWED ME SUCH KINDNESS, SUCH FRIENDSHIP. MAYBE THERE IS HOPE FOR THE HUMAN RACE AFTER ALL.

I CANNOT HOPE TO EVER REPAY YOU, BUT I WILL MAKE GOOD ON MY PROMISE TO YOU, DEAR PRIESTESS.
FWISSSH
I WILL NOT BURY MYSELF WITH HATRED. I WILL NOT BECOME SO DEVOTED TO DEFEATING DEATH THAT I SERVE IT.
FOR DEATH TAKES FROM YOU NOT ONLY EVERYTHING YOU HAVE...BUT EVERYTHING YOU WILL EVER HAVE. IT ISOLATES YOU FROM EVERYONE.
NO... NO!
GET ME OUT OF HERE! GET ME OUT--
UNTIL NOBODY IS EVEN THERE TO HEAR YOUR SCREAMS.
THE END